***Ghost Ranch***

Light picks this landscape down to bone.

It’s Boxing Day. The orange jumpsuits

six miles back pick trash while they do time.

The guards in their blue suits are white.

Someone has cut the Indian prisoners’ hair.

The mesa’s one short hard haul straight up.

Gray feather in the crack I work my fingers

into and tug and work them out again.

Then flat on top and land for miles and miles--

so much land. You find a pile of bones

and hold the pelvis up to frame a ragged disc

of sky. Not the real sky, I thought that day,

but blue enough to tell this story. You say

the feather’s from a dove and spot an eagle

circling high across the canyon, but I am not

so sure. We touch and circle and touch and circle

until we only circle: cloth against cloth, skin

not quite meeting, the way fences touch at the corners

of nations. Last night you slept so quietly,

I put a hand to your back to make sure

you were breathing, the other over your shoulder

and flat against the skin between nipple

and solar plexus: because breath may not be

a sure enough measure. We hover

over the animal that carved itself

this place to rest, past molecule, atom,

the stinging energy that drums the universe

into being. Don’t say you never felt it.

Even the stone was pulsing. Take my hand

if you can bear it, but let the other story go.